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THE WHITE ROSE

MEMPHIS.

BY W. C. FALKNER.

CHAPTER XXV. Concluded.

"I am so glad to hear you talk that way; may be God will think of our good resolve, and reward it by sparing her life. Somehow I have a hope that we shall hear favorable news, when our messenger returns. I can not think that I am ever again to behold those beautiful blue eyes; I can't realize it. The ways of Providence are full of mystery; but we know they are even just; and knowing this to be so, induces me to cling to the hope that our Lottie will be spared. It is my candid opinion that if she had been well, Viola would have been cleared; because she was in possession of strange facts, in connection with the case, which would have produced a different verdict. I was astonished to hear that Mr. Rockland let the case be tried during Lottie's illness. She often told me that she knew Viola was innocent, and that she would produce the necessary proof on the trial. I at first was inclined to doubt it, but Lottie seemed to be so earnest in her assertions, that I became almost convinced of its truth."

"Ah! Eddie, my poor sister may have believed in Viola's innocence; in fact I know she did; but that belief was founded in friendship, instead of facts. No; the proof was full and complete, and Mr. Rockland told me that during his thirty years' practice, he had never known the guilt of a prisoner so fully established, as it was in her case. He still clings to the idea of humanity, and I am free to confess, that I can not account for Viola's conduct, upon any other hypothesis. Mr. Rockland says that he has frequently met persons, whose minds were sound on general subjects, and completely defective on some single idea. Viola seems to be perfectly rational, however, and converses with her friends freely, using elegant language, while her deportment is in all respects dignified and proper. When she was on trial, she won the admiration of all the spectators, by her dignity and self-possession—she was calm, modest and beautiful as ever. She looked more like an angel, than a murderess; in fact she did not look like a criminal at all. Eddie, you no doubt imagine that you have suffered much, but your cause of sorrow is very slight, when compared with mine. If poor Lottie died, the loss will be as much mine as yours; for you can not love her more than I do; and when she leaves us she will go direct to heaven, where you can go to meet her. But how different it is with Viola; I loved her as well as you love Lottie; no man ever loved a woman more devotedly than I loved her. I might have borne to see her die, if she was as well prepared to meet God, as Lottie is; but when I know that she is forever lost to me, and perhaps her soul lost too, I feel and know, that I can not bear it."

"The pardoning power of God is unlimited; Christ did not die for righteous people alone, but he died to redeem sinners; and if you will have faith in Him, and serve Him with all your heart, you may be permitted to meet Viola in Heaven after all. But here comes Mr. Deediddle, to talk about the HARBAS CORPUS. Let us hear what he has to communicate."

Mr. Deediddle came blustering in, and it was with some difficulty that he squeezed his ponderous body through the small door of my cell.

"Ah! confound such small doors!" he muttered, as he began to brush the dust off his coat, with his red bandana. I can't see why people make such small doors any way. Well, Demar, I dropped in merely to let you know that we are all right—Judge Flaxback has made the HARBAS CORPUS returnable at nine o'clock to-morrow morning; he is to spend the night with me. Fact, sir, he's all right, accepting my invitation. I'll wine him, dine him, and card him to-night. I'll play whist with him all night, and let him win; that will settle our case all right; fact, sir, trust me to manage his sort."

"But Mr. Deediddle," said I, "I would prefer that no underhanded

means should be used in my case. I can prove my case beyond all doubt."

"Oh! no doubt you can, Mr. Demar, but what good will proof do, when the mind of the court is against you. Fact, sir; you had better let me manage the case in my own way. Fact, I am an old hand at the pump; been in harness over a quarter of a century; I am the man to prize you out—wine and whist are the great levers to prize with, before Flaxback. Fact is, he can't get round em."

Mr. Deediddle rattled away for nearly an hour, and I was glad when he took his departure. He had not been gone but a few minutes when Mrs. Debar came in. Harry sprang to his feet, and gazed at her in great astonishment, for several seconds, then said:

"Eddie, this is the lady I saw in Memphis, in that old brick house, and I thought I saw you there with her."

"It was my husband, sir, and not Mr. Demar," replied Mrs. Debar. "We were stopping in an old dilapidated brick house; my husband was waiting for some money to be sent to him. He made his escape from this jail, and went to Memphis; I followed him, and one night we fled, as we learned that detectives were following us. I have just received a letter from my husband; he is in Matamoros, Mexico, and I am going to meet him, as soon as Mr. Demar is released."

"I see through it all now," said Harry, you and your husband left Memphis, on the very night, when Demar was arrested at Horn Lake, this unlucky coincidence led me to believe that he had eloped with you, and had been false to my sister. Acting on this belief, I have committed an unpardonable blunder, and caused my sister's death, and ruined all my friends."

As Mrs. Debar wiped the fast falling tears from her eyes, she said "I am truly sorry, to hear of your misfortunes, but hope things are not so serious as you seem to think. I, too, have had my share of trouble; my poor husband has been compelled to exile himself from his country, when he was innocent, I love him, and I mean to go where he goes; I will share his sorrows, and do my best to make him happy. It is true, that my husband killed Mr. Clanton, but he did it in self-defense; and would have been able to prove it, but unfortunately, the only witness, who saw the whole transaction, died soon after the killing. Mr. Clanton was a deputy Sheriff, greatly beloved by many friends; and when he was killed, public indignation was aroused to such a pitch against my husband, that he was forced to fly for his life. The friends of the deceased, offered large rewards for his capture. He was arrested, and put in this jail, and I managed to bring tools to him, with which he effected his escape. I am not ashamed of it, but I must request you not to inform the authorities of my action, and I also request you, not to say anything about the letter I have received from my unfortunate husband. Mr. Clanton, shot at my husband, the bullet passed through his coat and vest, and when the deceased was about to shoot again, my husband struck him with a hatchet, breaking his skull, and causing instant death."

Mrs. Debar now went away, leaving me alone with Harry. She promised to be present on the next morning at the trial, to give her evidence, which would of course, be greatly in my favor. It was after night, and just six hours from the time my messenger had started, with my dispatch, when he came dashing into my cell with an answer. He had made the round trip, a distance of forty-eight miles in six hours. He informed me, that he had to wait at the office, just one hour for the answer, so he had done the traveling in five hours. My hand trembled when I took the dispatch from the messenger, and indeed well it might, for I knew that little paper, would tell a tale, that would seal my fate. I would tell me whether or not, those charming blue eyes were ever again to gaze on me. It would tell me whether or not, I was ever to clasp dear Lottie to my heart again. I hesitated and looked at Harry, but saw no encouragement there. He was as pale as death, and trembling from head to foot, and seemed to have ceased to breathe."

"Eddie," he gasped, "you may be prepared to hear the very worst, for her case was hopeless when I left home. That telegram, will either tell you she is dead, or that she is dying."

"Heaven, have mercy!" I exclaimed, as I glanced over the contents of the dispatch. My worst fears were realized; my precious darling was dying! Yes, dying for me; dying of a broken heart, caused by my mysterious absence. It is useless for me to try to describe how I felt, when I read the fatal news. No one can understand or appreciate it even if I could select words to describe how great was my misery. Harry stood like a marble statue, while there was a wild glare about his eyes, that was really frightful to behold. It was over half an hour, before either of us spoke, and there is no telling when the silence would have been broken, had it not been for the messenger.

"Will you wish to send another dispatch?" enquired the lad, who had been silently witnessing this painful scene. "If you do, sir, I can be ready to go again, as soon as I can eat a bite, and procure a fresh horse."

"I shall want to send another dispatch at daylight in the morning," was my answer. I was so completely paralyzed, with grief, that I could not shed a tear. It seemed to me, that my heart was freezing—and this strange feeling was a new thing to me—I had never experienced any thing resembling it before. My audience will readily understand what cause of grief I had, when the dispatch is read. "Here it is:"

"DEAR EDDIE—The welcome news of your safety received; would to heaven, it had come a week sooner; it would have saved our dear Lottie's life—but, alas! it came too late. Put your trust in God, my dear unfortunate boy, and bear your great sorrow as becomes a brave man. Lottie can not possibly live more than forty eight hours longer. She is sinking very fast. Her mind is perfectly clear, and when your dispatch was read to her, she smiled sweetly as her eyes brightened up—then closing them, the tears began to stream from them. She pressed your picture to her lips a dozen times, then said: 'Poor darling Eddie, how glad I would be to see him, before I die. Then I wish to see poor brother Harry, so he can forgive the wrong I have done him. I thought he had killed Eddie, and refused to believe him when he denied it.'"

She talks of you and Harry all the time. I wish it was so, that you could get here before she dies. You might do it, if you can get released in time for the up-train to-morrow evening. I will send another dispatch, early in the morning."

DODSON.

I had implicit faith in Doctor Dodson as a physician, because he possessed a well cultivated mind, and had the advantage of thirty years experience in the practice of his profession. I also knew that he never ventured to give an opinion in regard to the condition of his patients, unless he felt fully justified by the fact, in doing so. Notwithstanding my high opinion of his judgment, I still clung to the hope that he was mistaken as to Lottie's condition. I have often heard him and other good physicians say that "while there was life, there was hope," and you all know how the human mind will nurse a hope, even when no reason or foundation exists for it to stand on. I had sent up so many silent, but earnest prayers to God in which I had implored and begged Him to let my dear Lottie live, that I was loth to believe He would take her from me. I could not realize the idea that her beautiful young person was to be consigned to the grave. When I had seen her last, she was the very picture of health and life—her fair cheeks all aglow with vivacity—her large expressive eyes filled with evidences of hope and her athletic step indicating strength and vigor. Now, how was I to realize the fact, that all this strength, health and vigor were gone, while that fair form was struggling in the very arms of death? The fact is I was so bewildered with grief, that I was unable to think correctly on the subject. Harry spent the night in my cell, and I can assert truthfully that he was more completely subdued by his deep grief, than he had ever been before. I think that a great

change was wrought in him on that occasion, which has since proved of no little benefit to him. His indomitable pride was partially injured, and his haughty spirit completely humbled; and he threw himself prostrate on the floor, calling aloud to God for help. He did not rise from the floor during the night, though he never closed his eyes in sleep; but some times he would remain silent for several minutes; perhaps he was praying; then, again he would seem to be convulsed with his great sorrow. I paced the floor in silence, for I was sunk so deep in despair that I was scarcely able to command my voice. My heart yearned for freedom; my mind flew to Memphis and looked at my darling, as she was wrestling with death. The first gray streaks of approaching dawn, that came stealing through my small window, were indeed a welcome sight to me. As soon as it was light enough to enable me to see how to write, I penned a message to be immediately sent to Doctor Dodson. The messenger was promptly on hand at six o'clock ready with a fresh horse to start with my dispatch, and long before the sun began to peep over the eastern hills, he was dashing with great speed towards the telegraph office. He would be back with fresh news by eleven o'clock by which time I had reason to believe I would be restored to liberty, and then I would fly to my darling. After the messenger was gone, I instructed Harry to go out to the village and secure two of the best horses that could be found, and to have them ready saddled and hitched in the court-house yard, in order that we might be off instantly, after the trial should be over. I knew that the trial would not consume much time, as the proof would be ample, and unquestionable, and I thought may be we might be able to start by ten o'clock. Public opinion in the village, had changed since the arrival of Harry Wallingford; and it was now generally considered that a great mistake had been committed, and that the wrong man had been arrested. The rough black smith who had riveted the iron on my leg was employed the evening before the trial, to cut them off, and I was enabled to secure a little exercise. In his rough uncouth manner, the blacksmith apologized for the unkindness he had shown towards me when fastening the manacle on my limbs. As I was not in a mood to cherish ill-will I accepted the blunt apology and extended my hand to the honest mechanic, who seized and gave it a hearty shake.

"Never saw two peas more alike than you and Debar," muttered the blacksmith as he let the heavy chain fall on the floor and fixed his eyes intently on me. "No wonder the officer took you for Debar; I was ready to swear that you were the identical man. It's lucky they found out the mistake—ain't it? They might have hung you by mistake, that would have been rather awkward wouldn't it?"

I made no answer to this strange enquiry, for I was thinking about other things—my thoughts, were in Memphis, hovering over Lottie. Harry returned soon, and informed me that he had been so fortunate as to secure two splendid young horses, whose owner had informed him, that they could take us to the station in two hours and a half, without any danger of hurting them. My dungeon door was now thrown open, and all restraint on my movements withdrawn. The drunken jailer, who had treated me with so much unkindness, showed signs of repentance—he begged me to go down and take breakfast with his family—and he offered a thousand humble apologies for the rough treatment he had given me. "I thought you were the same scamp who broke jail, and left me with the bag to hold," he said. "Every body was down on me, for letting Debar get away, when I couldn't help it—some rascal furnished him with tools, and I knew nothing about it, until he was gone; therefore when they brought you here, I thought you were the same man, and I didn't care to be kind to the man who had acted so badly as Debar. You are the very image of Debar, and then your name sounds so much like his. I can detect a slight difference in the color of your hair, and that of Debar; then he had a small scar on his forehead, just above the left eye, been before. I think that a great

change was wrought in him on that occasion, which has since proved of no little benefit to him. His indomitable pride was partially injured, and his haughty spirit completely humbled; and he threw himself prostrate on the floor, calling aloud to God for help. He did not rise from the floor during the night, though he never closed his eyes in sleep; but some times he would remain silent for several minutes; perhaps he was praying; then, again he would seem to be convulsed with his great sorrow. I paced the floor in silence, for I was sunk so deep in despair that I was scarcely able to command my voice. My heart yearned for freedom; my mind flew to Memphis and looked at my darling, as she was wrestling with death. The first gray streaks of approaching dawn, that came stealing through my small window, were indeed a welcome sight to me. As soon as it was light enough to enable me to see how to write, I penned a message to be immediately sent to Doctor Dodson. The messenger was promptly on hand at six o'clock ready with a fresh horse to start with my dispatch, and long before the sun began to peep over the eastern hills, he was dashing with great speed towards the telegraph office. He would be back with fresh news by eleven o'clock by which time I had reason to believe I would be restored to liberty, and then I would fly to my darling. After the messenger was gone, I instructed Harry to go out to the village and secure two of the best horses that could be found, and to have them ready saddled and hitched in the court-house yard, in order that we might be off instantly, after the trial should be over. I knew that the trial would not consume much time, as the proof would be ample, and unquestionable, and I thought may be we might be able to start by ten o'clock. Public opinion in the village, had changed since the arrival of Harry Wallingford; and it was now generally considered that a great mistake had been committed, and that the wrong man had been arrested. The rough black smith who had riveted the iron on my leg was employed the evening before the trial, to cut them off, and I was enabled to secure a little exercise. In his rough uncouth manner, the blacksmith apologized for the unkindness he had shown towards me when fastening the manacle on my limbs. As I was not in a mood to cherish ill-will I accepted the blunt apology and extended my hand to the honest mechanic, who seized and gave it a hearty shake.

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Decatur, 2:45 am 12:25 pm

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